

# COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR FAITH AND SPIRITUAL COMMUNITIES



Religious spaces, such as churches, temples, synagogues, and mosques are required to follow the [current public health order](#). This document outlines the best practices for religious services in order to keep your faith community safe.



## BEST PRACTICE : VIRTUAL SERVICES

**Providing virtual services is still the safest and recommended practice.**

- **Continue to provide virtual services.** Religious entities are required to use technology to the greatest extent possible to avoid meeting in person. Beyond this requirement we are promoting continued virtual practice because it is a public health best practice. Because we have [community spread in Dane County](#), this recommendation lowers individual exposure and protects others.
- **Promote [everyday prevention measures](#).** Include reminders in bulletins, programs, and other materials about staying home when sick, covering cough/sneezes with tissues, and washing hands.
- **Continue providing important and essential community service and support.** Uses of the faith space covered by other areas of the Safe at Home orders, such as childcare facilities, pantries, or wellness support meetings should continue to function under guidance and regulations for those activities.



## SAFER OPTION: PARKING LOT AND OUTDOOR SERVICES

Remember that religious entities are required to use technology to the greatest extent possible to avoid meeting in person. If you plan to host an outdoor or parking-lot service, please follow these precautions:

- **Ask people to stay home [if they are sick](#)** or if they have had contact with anyone who has confirmed or probable COVID-19 illness. If you leave your home, [assume you are being exposed to COVID-19](#). Anyone can [get tested](#).
- **Limit person-to-person contact.** Ask people to stay in their cars, park away from one another, and keep windows up. Folks should not gather, even outdoors. Recommend that people to use the bathroom before they come to the service to limit use of indoor space. Using shared restrooms poses a significant risk for infection.
- **Ask people to wear a [cloth face covering](#).** These are an additional tool to prevent people with the virus who don't have symptoms from spreading the virus.
- **Avoid shared surfaces.** Please use an electronic or mail-in donation method and do not touch hands or mouths to any common surfaces including sacred objects, or texts. If you must share food or drink ceremonially do not use a shared vessel. Place single use items on the car or other surface for the recipient to take. Anyone sharing items should wear a cloth face covering, and wash or sanitize hands between any contact with people or surfaces.



## NOT RECOMMENDED: IN-PERSON, INDOOR SERVICES

Remember that religious entities are required to use technology to the greatest extent possible to avoid meeting in person. If you must host in-person religious services, follow these precautions:

- **Shorten the length of the service.** Services held indoors should be completed as quickly as possible. Consider adding additional services to help limit the amount of attendees and stagger times of entering and exiting the building to limit contact.
- **Sick individuals and vulnerable populations should stay home.** The Dane County order requires that you put practices in place to ensure that staff who are [symptomatic](#) or have had contact with a COVID positive person, not enter the place of worship—you are encouraged to do the same for non-staff folks at your place of worship. Anyone with symptoms should get tested for COVID-19.
- **Limit the amount of people allowed in the building.** Follow [the current order](#) for the maximum number of people allowed in the space being used.
- **Adopt safe practices for childcare.** Individuals living in the same household should stay together as much as possible. Childcare during services is highly discouraged.
- **Continue to promote strong everyday prevention measures,** like washing your hands and covering your cough. Attendees should not touch each other (for example, do not shake hands or hug). Keep people who do not live together at least six feet apart at all times.
- **Ask attendees to wear a [cloth face covering](#).** These are an additional tool to prevent people who don't have symptoms from spreading the virus.
- **Avoid shared surfaces.** Please use an electronic or mail-in donation methods and do not touch hands or mouths to any common surfaces including sacred objects, or texts. If you must share food or drink ceremonially do not use a shared vessel. Place single use items on a surface for the recipient to take while maintaining social distancing. Anyone sharing items should wear a cloth face covering, and wash or sanitize hands between any contact with people or surfaces.
- **Strongly urge no singing or choirs as [this can dramatically exacerbate the spread of COVID-19](#).** We recommend eliminating communal singing or chanting from your gathering.
- **[Increase cleaning and disinfection of the facility](#),** to limit staff and public exposure to COVID-19. Also, adopt protocols to clean and disinfect in the event of a positive COVID-19 case in the building.
- **Make a plan.** [The CDC guidance](#), [The Secure Community Network](#), [WI Council of Churches](#), [This Blog](#), and other resources exist to help you plan and think through questions to keep your faith community safe. We encourage everyone to ask questions and make certain that you are prepared to protect your community before allowing any, even limited, in person gatherings.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** [publichealthmdc.com/coronavirus](https://publichealthmdc.com/coronavirus)